

The cry is heard again, "THE HOOKS ARE DOWN", and in order for employees to feel secure through the difficult days that we are now in, and which will continue for the next several months, the following notes which relate to a theory of the Middle Management Process are provided. The theory was evolved over several years by a small group of RADIATION/HESD* employees while they were involved in the Middle Management Process itself.

THE BLOOPY-BAG THEORY OF MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

The Bloopy-Bag Theory of Middle Management is based on the premise that Middle Management at HESD dwells in a large, translucent, spongy, absorbent, impenetrable, expandable, contractible bag. Middle Management is in Brownian motion within the bag.

Lower Management stands on a platform below the bag and agitates the bag with extremely sharp spears which cannot penetrate the bag but which cause serious, painful, wounding blows to be felt by those middle managers near the bottom of the bag. This is one cause of the violent agitation within the bag.

There is an orifice in the bottom of the bag from which a tube extends to Never-Never Land. Middle Management, inactive, or failing to respond to the motion, exits the bag through the tube which extends through a hole in the lower-management platform. There is a cul-de-sac at the juncture of the tube and the bag that occasionally collects a middle manager from near

* HARRIS ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS DIVISION

the bottom of the bag. Middle managers in the cul-de-sac are only partially visible and seem to carry on a timeless existence, but more importantly are definitely not-in-motion. There is a dump cord that extends from the cul-de-sac around the outside of the bag to upper management. An anonymous manager is the operator of the dump cord. Operation of the cord explosively ejects the contents of the cul-de-sac out the tube to Never-Never Land. No theory has ever been established regarding the timing of the anonymous upper managers operation of the dump cord. Tales, dim in our folklore, say that only one middle manager, with the initial "M", ever got out of the cul-de-sac and back into motion within the bag proper.

The position of UPPER MANAGEMENT relative to the bag is as follows: Sitting posture, bare posterior, expectant, awaiting or experiencing stroking by members of Middle Management in motion near the top of the bag. All members of Upper Management are visible to each other, always smiling as if being stroked, and each is equipped with a shepherd's-crook-like instrument called a HOOK. The purpose of HOOKS is to effect promotions amongst Middle Management as follows: The HOOK can be lowered through the hole in the top of the bag usually covered by the upper manager's posterior so as to catch a middle manager. Obviously the only criteria involved in promoting a middle manager is for him to be in motion near the top of the bag. Now, not all Upper Managers are sitting on holes. This is not apparent to anyone (strokee' or strokor') during normal motion within the bag since the bag is very thin. But when it

becomes necessary to let a HOOK down, upper managers discover amongst themselves who can, and who cannot, let a HOOK down and this is a time of REVELATION. Some Upper Management smiles are replaced by frowns and knit-brows during REVELATION. REVELATION is also celebrated by those middle managers near the top of the bag.

Let us return to the Brownian movement within the bag which is the heart of the whole matter. The movement is based on the encounters of middle managers, one with the other and with the walls of the bag, as well as the agitation from the spears at the bottom of the bag. At each encounter it is obviously to the benefit of the middle manager to rebound upward. The primary requisites for this are aggressiveness and ability to survive in a hostile environment. An upward bound within the bag (termed a 'BLOOP' by those who know) is associated with several seemingly trivial successes. Among these are the ability of one middle manager to take away another's secretary, telephone number, or office space. Other valuable evidences of an upward bound include offering the man a position before he offers you one, success in the resolution of a conflict which has been escalated to Upper Management, preferably the General Manager, involving the use of some minor resource such as an automatic door closer or an umbrella. Invitations to cocktail parties and such are much sought after as evidence of an upward bound. Delegation of a program which is in deep trouble to another Middle Manager guarantees free flight near the top of the bag and high probability of a succeeding, more resounding 'BLOOP'.

But the greatest evidence of all the evidences of an upward bound is the 'BLOOP' which occurs when one middle manager usurps another's HEADSTONE LOCATION. Many are the Middle Managers who have abandoned a wholly desirable HEADSTONE LOCATION rather than suffer the consequences of its loss in a barely-visible forthcoming encounter. Most still go dreamy-eyed as they describe the joys of parking on the grass, in the alley, at the back door, by the Dumpster.

Motion within the bag is characterized by periods of relative quiet but only in relation to periods of severe agitation that occur when the Middle Management battle-cry is heard "THE HOOKS ARE DOWN"! The bag contracts and expands with monstrous huffing, puffing, belching, steaming, gasping, and expulsions through the lower orifice. REVELATION occurs at these times among Upper and Middle Management, and Lower Management (rewarded with overtime pay and double time pay) dances with glee and thrusts spears into the bag 24 hours a day. Movement within the bag is violent, encounters are sought, champions rise and fall, smiles and frowns come and go, and ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS is practiced by one and all. Blood flows near the bottom of the bag and the sweat and tears within the bag raise the humidity and the temperature to the point that live steam escapes through the HOOK orifices. Neither group of Upper Management finds survival easy; those with holes suffer from the steam; those without holes have nothing to hold on to during the severe agitation. HOOKS glow white hot in the steamy mist and remain visible to all. Motion near the top of the bag is so violent that an occasional Upper Manager is dragged back down into the bag by the impact of a Middle Manager on his HOOK. The Middle Manager who dragged

him down becomes a CHAMPION to lower management and the new Middle Manager (for such he now is) is much sought after for encounter. Free movement near the top of the bag is difficult to achieve but encounters are numberless, searing, painful, wholly without morality or ethics, but wholly justified on the basis of, "This is the only solution that is workable".

The Middle Manager is well advised to take advantage of the periods of relative quiet within the bag to plan well his plots and ploys, to gird his loins, to stay in shape through practice encounters, to describe the results of encounters as positive no matter how negative, to toughen and protect his posterior and the soles of his feet, to cement his relationships with his office, his secretary, his phone number, his headstone location, to develop a tough hide, to practice emotionless aggressiveness, to develop an unassailable attitude toward his solutions, and above all else, test the spears at the bottom at least once so that he will never, ever again lose his resolve to bound upward ---- 'BLOOP' as it's called.

We hope the reader has an improved outlook as a result of understanding the process. If you must ask, "Am I in the bag?" you are not. The entry into the bag is unknown and cannot be sought or decreed. Best wishes during this time when "THE HOOKS ARE DOWN!".

